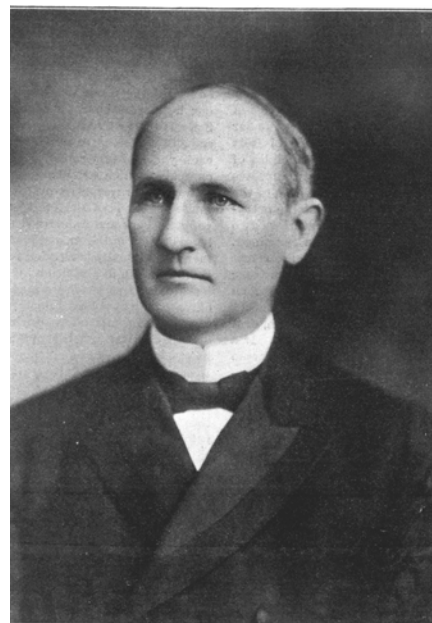


and lessen our usefulness as citizens, but guarantee us an equal chance with other men to work out our destiny.” The request represented a compromise within the black community because more radical leaders such as George White preferred to promote emigration from the state should the Democrats make their lives in the state “intolerable.”⁶⁷

Despite the efforts of black leaders to temper Democratic Party leaders in the legislature, the suffrage amendment went to the voters as a referendum in 1900. Because of the 1899 legislature’s multitude of changes to Fusion legislation—all intended to reverse the gains made for average voters—blacks were unable to use their collective voice at the polls in 1900. And because few were willing to brave the Red Shirt intimidation and register to vote, the overall outcome favored the Democrats.⁶⁸

1900 Election

The 1900 election season and subsequent Democratic victory closed the door on Republicans and their involvement in state politics. At the top of the election season agenda was ratification of the suffrage amendment to limit black voting. Furnifold Simmons led the Democratic campaign that again manifested itself in print, speeches, and intimidation. The *Raleigh News and Observer* led the way among newspapers; popular speaker and gubernatorial candidate Charles B. Aycock traveled throughout the state with other speakers to preach the Democratic Party mantra of white supremacy; and Red Shirts again were on the ride, using intimidation



Governor Charles Brantley Aycock
On November 11, 1898, Aycock wrote that the 1898 election victory was “a glorious victory that we have won and the very extent of it frightened me. We shall need wisdom to prove ourselves worthy of it.” He concluded his letter by stating that he “regret[ed] the Wilmington affair of yesterday greatly.”

Charles B. Aycock to Henry G. Connor, Henry G. Connor Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.
Image: North Carolina State Archives.

and fear to maintain solidarity of whites and repression of blacks.

As a result of the violent and well-organized Democratic campaign of 1898 and the ensuing changes to state government, Populists and Republicans were in disarray. Both parties acknowledged that the issue of race was problematic and minimized the topic in their campaigns. Even as early as October 1898, Populists had realized that courting black voters had once been necessary, but, in light of the success of the white supremacy platform, such methods were now “inadequate and

⁶⁷ White eventually relocated to the north and founded Whitesboro, New Jersey for the resettlement of Wilmington refugees. McDuffie, “Politics in Wilmington,” 782.

⁶⁸ Crow and Hatley, *Black Americans in North Carolina and the South*, 149.